

FACT SHEET: SAFETY BELTS and PICK-UP TRUCKS

- Primary Safety Belt Laws Save Lives!

- Failure to use a seat belt contributes to more fatalities than any other single traffic safety-related behavior. (NHTSA)
- Among passenger vehicle occupants over 4 years old, safety belts prevent 15,700 fatalities, 350,000 serious injuries, and \$67 billion in economic costs associated with traffic crashes every year. (NHTSA)
- Repealing the current exemption for occupants of pick-up trucks will save 26 lives and prevent 400 serious injuries each year along with an economic cost savings of \$84 million dollars to Georgia taxpayers. (NHTSA, Crash Cost Estimates) Preusser Research Group, in a 2005 study, estimated that repealing the pick-up truck safety belt exemption will save Georgia \$25.1 million in Medicaid costs over a period of ten years.
- Nationally, Georgia and Indiana are the only two states with primary belt laws that include an exemption for pick up trucks. (NHTSA)

Pick-Up Truck Occupants at Highest Risk of Injury or Death

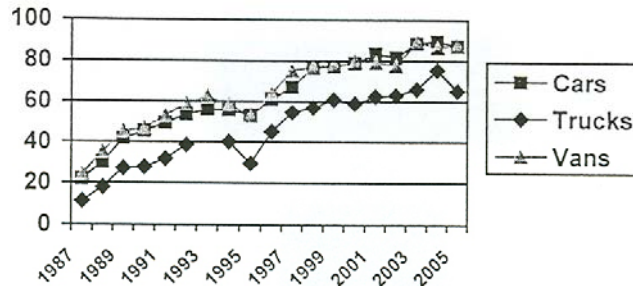
- In Georgia, there were 93,179 pick-up truck crashes in 2004 and 17,804 pick up truck occupants were injured. (GA DOT Crash Data, 2004)
- From 2000-2004, 147 fatal crash victims who died in pick up trucks were 0-18 years of age. (NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System, 2004)
- From 1996-2004, Georgia experienced a 7.7% increase in the number of fatalities in motor vehicle crashes involving pick up trucks. (GA DOT Crash Data, 2004)
- In Georgia, there were 285 deaths among occupants of pick up trucks representing 22% of all motor vehicle fatalities. (NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System, 2004).
- In Georgia, 67.4% of occupants who died in pick up trucks were not wearing safety belts. By comparison, only 40.5% of passenger car occupants who died in crashes were not wearing safety belts. (NHTSA Fatality Analysis Reporting System, 2004).

Pick Up Truck Occupants and Safety Belt Use --- Special Challenges

- "For occupants of light pick-up trucks, seat belts significantly reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60%, moderate-to-critical injury by 65%, and serious injury by 80% (in rollover crashes)." (NHTSA Safety Belts and Rural Communities - 2005 Report)
- Pickup truck occupants with no restraints were 2.7 times more likely to be admitted to the hospital than those who wore safety belts. The average total hospitalization cost for an unrestrained pickup truck occupant was \$43,601 compared to \$25,267 for those who wore seat belts in a pickup truck. (GA CODES Data, 2001)

- In Georgia, the safety belt use rate for pick up truck drivers is only 79.6%, well below drivers of other vehicle types. Safety belt use for drivers of cars and vans is 90.4% and 90.8%, respectively. (Georgia Observational Safety Belt Survey, November 2005)

Safety Belt Use for Vans, Cars, and Trucks (1987-2005)



Georgia Observational Survey, November 2005

Rural Communities are at Risk

- Rural Americans face a greater risk of being injured or killed in a traffic crash than people who live and commute in urban areas. Only 21 percent of the population lives in rural areas in this country, yet 60% of the total motor vehicle fatalities occurred on rural roadways. (NHTSA-Safety Belts and Rural Communities –2005 Report)
- In Georgia, 57% of all motor vehicle fatalities occurred on rural roadways. (GA DOT Crash Data, 2004)
- The motor vehicle fatality rate in Georgia's rural communities is more than double the fatality rate in urban areas; in 2004, the fatality rate was 2.13 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (vmt) in rural communities compared to 1.03 fatalities per 100 million (VMT) in urban areas. (GA DOT Crash Data, 2004)

Federal Incentive Grant Dollars Available for States with Primary Belt Laws

- Georgia will lose \$20,698,353 in federal funds for 2006, if we do not repeal the seat belt exemption for drivers and passengers of pick-up trucks. These funds may be used for safety improvements (pavement and shoulder widening, rumble strips, rail-highway crossing safety, traffic calming, etc.) and behavioral programs (rural safety initiatives, impaired driving, safety belts, teen driver education). (NHTSA – SAFETEA LU Summary)

AAA Survey on Support of Repeal Effort

- A recent survey of Georgians, commissioned by AAA Auto Club South, indicated that 88.5% of the general public supports repeal of the pick-up truck exemption. **House Bill 18** and **Senate Bill 157** both propose a repeal of the exemption. (Communications Center Inc., 2005)

For more information, contact Bob Cucchi, GA Safety Belt Coalition at 770-804-4057 or rcucchi1@ford.com.

Primary Safety Belt Laws: Does Your State Have One?

For the state of Georgia, the answer is, "Not really." In a recent survey representative of our nearly 600,000 Georgia members, 94 percent supported improving state law so that it applies to pickup trucks driven on public roadways. To learn more and to encourage your state lawmakers to make this lifesaving change, please visit aaa.com and click on the "Get Involved" link at the bottom of our home page. — Kevin W. Bakewell, Senior Vice President

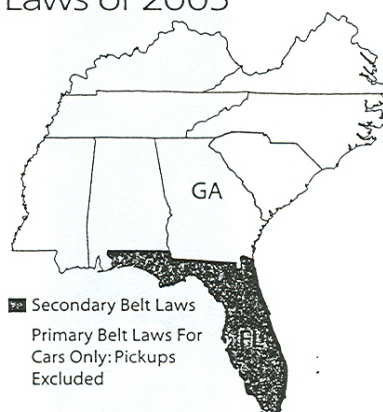
We all know that buckling safety belts and ensuring that children are properly secured in child safety seats or booster seats is critical to a family's safe road travel. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for all Americans from age 3 to 33, and safety belts are the single most effective way to protect yourself and your passengers.

The Department of Transportation's 2005 national safety belt survey shows that use is higher than ever, but there are still too many riding unbuckled. The overall use rate is now 82 percent, but use by many Americans still lags behind. Teens and young adults wear belts less often, as do drivers and passengers in pickup trucks and residents of rural areas.

Safety belts save lives, but only if they are worn. The good news is that about 15,000 Americans are alive today because their safety belts saved them in a crash last year. Unfortunately, another 6,000 lives could have been saved if they had buckled up.

One of the best ways to increase safety belt use is with a strong state

State Safety Belt Laws of 2005



safety belt law and good law enforcement. Almost every state has an adult safety belt law, but the ability to enforce this law varies, resulting in lower use rates in some states. Twenty-two states have primary safety belt laws that allow officers to stop cars and write a citation if they see an unbuckled driver or passenger. Other states have less effective secondary enforcement laws that only allow the officer to

write a safety belt citation if the vehicle is stopped for another violation.

NHTSA found that on average, states with primary safety belt laws have use rates about 11 percentage points higher than secondary law states. That is why the new Federal highway program reauthorization law, entitled the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) includes an important new incentive program to encourage states to upgrade their laws. This new law gives a total of about \$125 million each year in incentives to states that upgrade their secondary belt law to allow primary enforcement or achieve 85 percent safety belt use.

I believe this new incentive program offers state legislatures a unique opportunity to both save lives and get some relief for tight state transportation budgets. The investment makes good economic sense since the nation stands to save about \$3.6 billion per year as a result of the lives and injuries saved if all states with secondary safety belt laws would upgrade to primary enforcement.

If my prediction is correct, we will be seeing many more states moving toward stronger primary safety belt laws over the next several years. I urge the remaining 28 states without primary belt laws to consider enacting them, as these laws have proven effective in saving lives, preventing serious injuries, increasing productivity, and reducing health care costs. You might expect a government program with this kind of return to be complicated. This one is simple: enact a primary safety belt law, earn a large financial incentive for your state, increase safety belt use, and save lives. ■

Jacqueline Glassman is Acting Administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.





DATE: November 15, 2005
 TO: Those Listed
 FROM: Brett Waters -- Market Research Analyst
 SUBJECT: 2005 Georgia Seat Belt Survey

Background & Objectives

Public and Government Relations would like to survey the general population in Georgia and ask their opinion about the current seat belt law and the exemption for pickup trucks. AAA and a Georgia Coalition supporting seat belt usage for pickup trucks are in a position to influence possible legislation. The survey was designed to gather the opinions of residents in Georgia in order to lobby legislators.

Key Findings

Residents in Georgia strongly support expanding the mandatory safety belt law to include pickup trucks driven on public roadways. Nearly nine in ten residents (85%), including those who live in rural Georgia, favor requiring the use of safety belts by occupants of all passenger vehicles driven on public roadways.

Among the 15% of residents who are opposed to expanding the mandatory safety belt law to include pickup trucks, nearly one-fourth would reconsider their opposition if the federal government would provide the state of Georgia \$20.7 million additional funding for transportation if pickup trucks were included in the mandatory safety belt law.

Taken together – those who support expanding the law to include all vehicles and those who would be in favor if it meant Georgia would receive additional federal transportation funding – nearly nine in ten Georgia residents (89%) would favor requiring the use of safety belts by occupants of all passenger vehicles driven on public roadways.

Women are more likely than men to favor expanding the mandatory safety belt law to include pickup trucks, with nine in ten women in favor compared to three-fourths of men.

Detailed Findings

Q1. Current Georgia law requires mandatory safety belt use for occupants of all passenger vehicles except pick-up trucks. Do you favor or oppose requiring the use of safety belts by occupants of all passenger vehicles driven on public roadways?

	All Georgia N = 600	Rural Georgia N = 400	Metro Atlanta N = 200
Favor	84.9%	84.8%	85.0%
Oppose	15.1%	15.3%	15.0%

	All Georgia		Rural Georgia		Metro Atlanta	
	Male n=224	Female n=377	Male n=150	Female n=250	Male n=74	Female n=126
Favor	76.3%	89.9%	77.3%	89.2%	75.7%	90.5%
Oppose	23.7%	10.1%	22.7%	10.8%	24.3%	9.5%

Q2. (If 'Oppose' in Question 1) If this safety belt law were to also require pick up truck occupants to wear a safety belt, the federal government would provide the state of Georgia \$20.7 million additional funding for transportation. Considering this, would you favor or oppose its passage?

	All Georgia	Rural Georgia	Metro Atlanta
	N = 91	N = 61	N = 30
Favor	24.4%	29.5%	20.0%
Oppose	75.6%	70.5%	80.0%

Note: If combined (Q1 = Favor and Q2 = Favor), then approximately 89% of residents in Georgia would favor requiring the use of safety belts by occupants of all passenger vehicles driven on public roadways.

	All Georgia	Rural Georgia	Metro Atlanta
	N = 600	N = 400	N = 200
Favor	88.5%	89.3%	88.0%
Oppose	11.5%	10.7%	12.0%

Methodology

What: Telephone survey of 600 randomly selected residents who live in Georgia. The survey questions were drafted by ACS Public & Government Relations.

Who: A total of 600 Georgia residents were surveyed. A random digit dialing (RDD) methodology was used to generate the samples for each group.

400 surveys were completed from a random sample of residents representing rural Georgia. Rural Georgia is defined as residents who live in the following area codes: 706, 762, 478, 912, and 229.

An additional 200 surveys were completed from a random sample of residents representing the metro Atlanta area. Metro Atlanta is defined as residents who live in the following area codes: 770, 678, and 404.

When: Data collection took place on November 8 and 9, 2005.

Weighting: The data representing *All Georgia* was weighted using demographic information from the 2004 Census Population estimate in order to accurately reflect the proportion of all residents living in rural and metro areas.

The survey results for the 600 residents in Georgia have an overall statistical error rate of 4 percentage points. That means there is a 95% chance that the results found in this survey are within +/- 4.0 percentage points of the results that would have been found if all residents in Georgia had been interviewed. The specific statistical error rate for a particular survey response depends on the number of respondents to the survey question and on the observed proportion.

- The survey results for the 400 residents who live in rural Georgia have an overall statistical error rate of 4.9 percentage points.
- The survey results for the 200 residents who live in metro Atlanta have an overall statistical error rate of 6.9 percentage points.

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